

# Brent Cotton

Hueys Fine Art, June 1-30



Light of the Morning, oil, 16 x 20.



Solitude of the River, oil, 48 x 60.

“**LIGHT IS WHAT** really captures my eye—scenes and moments that are ethereal, almost spiritual. Light has that effect, and it conjures a range of motion,” says Brent Cotton, whose solo show this month at Hueys Fine Art is entitled *Chasing the Light*. The show, which features 10 new works, includes an artist’s reception on Friday, June 3, from 5 to 7 p.m.

“He’s found an original quality to his work that you don’t often find in artists today. Many artists haven’t found their own voices,” says gallery owner Keith Huey. “But Brent portrays the inner quality of who he is through his work. He’s tapped into his soul to paint what he paints, and people are drawn to it immediately.”

Cotton is known for painting river scenes and anglers—and it’s no wonder, since he lives near the Bitterroot River in Montana and is himself an avid fly-fisherman. For this show, he has broadened his sources of inspiration, but most of his subjects are found within 10 miles of his home.

For example, the chickens in his backyard coop caught his eye, and he brings both a small study and a larger studio piece of the scene. He shows a painting of his cat—a subject that marks a true departure for him. “I’m finding that as I mature, some of my inspirations change. Some of the things I’d pass over in the past, now I slow down and take notice of them,” he says. “The cat painting isn’t in my wheelhouse, necessarily, but I still want to pursue that. I don’t want people to pigeonhole me as the guy who paints only fly-fishermen and water, though that’s my passion, and I never want to be rid of that.”

The show also includes winter scenes, one of which demonstrates his recent experimentations with techniques. In *LIGHT OF THE MORNING*, a diagonal streak of light cuts across the snow, illuminating a group of evergreen trees. For this piece, he painted over another painting he was dissatisfied with. On



**October Afternoon, oil, 10 x 20.**



**Free Rangers, Study, oil, 6 x 8.**



**A Place in the Sun, oil, 9 x 12.**

close inspection, layers of that original effort can still be seen. “I’m letting some of that texture and old painting show through. In the past, I would have covered that up. It’s allowed me to loosen up and go with my instincts, to put down as little paint as possible to convey the scene and the strong light,” he says.

Of course, all of the scenes bear Cotton’s signature approach to painting

light, so perfectly rendered that the viewer can feel the warmth of a sunset. “I can convey the mood by witnessing that type of light and atmosphere. I’m trying to capture that, make it believable, and have it strike an emotional chord. I want to create paintings that suck you in from across the room, that make you want to get involved in the paintings,” he says. —*Ashley M. Biggers*

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